

REMARKS

Applicant requests favorable consideration and allowance of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-37 are pending in this application, with Claims 1, 16, 23, 25, 27, and 28 being independent claims.

Claims 1-3, 16-18, and 23-28 have been allowed.

Claims 4-15, 19-22, and 29-37 have been objected to as being improper multiple dependent claims. In response, Applicant has amended Claims 4-7, 9-11, 19-21, and 29-37 to eliminate any improper multiple dependencies. Applicant submits that each of Claims 4-15, 19-22, and 29-37 incorporates all of the limitations of at least one of allowed Claims 1-3, 16-18, and 23-28, and therefore Applicant submits that Claims 4-15, 19-22, and 29-37 should also be allowed.

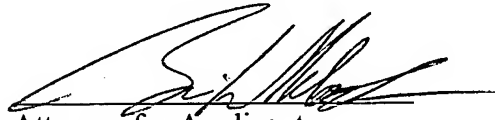
For the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, entry of this Amendment, withdrawal of the above-noted objection, and an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

With respect to entry of this Amendment, Applicant respectfully traverses the close of prosecution on the merits to the extent this Amendment is deemed "prosecution." The close of prosecution in accordance with *Ex parte Quayle* is appropriate when all pending claims are allowed and only formal matters are outstanding, such as the correction of the specification and/or drawings. Since objected to claims remain pending in this application, Applicant submits there are more than mere formal matters outstanding and

that the close of prosecution on the merits was premature. Accordingly, Applicant requests entry of this Amendment to overcome the outstanding claim objection.

Applicant's undersigned representative may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office at (202) 530-1010. All written correspondence should be directed to the below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian L. Klock", is written over a horizontal line.

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